

## Why Do Not Catholics Appreciate Their Schools, Colleges, Universities?

Continued from Seventeenth page.

that social prestige in one's own community accompanies membership in certain of the larger and older colleges and that a young man may say in after years "I studied at Podunk," with much the same air that a man formerly said "Civis Romanus Sum." Not one of these things, of course, is true. There is probably no single Catholic institution that provides all the courses a young man may want, agriculture and ceramics, I do not know of any programme of studies that is not provided in one or the other of our Catholic institutions, and I am altogether sincere in saying that the work is done at least as well in the Catholic colleges. Similarly, it is not true that social prestige comes with being a "Podunk" man or that at "Podunk" a youth will make intimate friendships with a lot of men who will smooth his path in business during the after years. Moreover, the discipline in the larger Catholic schools is not such as any well meaning and well behaving young man resents at all, and the other details of his life are managed for him with an eye single to his comfort and advantage. There will be very widespread and decent appreciation of the great and singular services of the Catholic school when our people clear their minds of a lot of these foolish conceptions.

Secondly, the lack of endowment in nearly all our schools is strong presumptive evidence that our people lack appreciation. There are, it is true, three or four schools that have received either from individuals or groups of people considerable amounts of money, but in general our institutions have been obliged to get on with grateful words and a tender glance of reminiscence and the luster of Rah! of reunion, and such other highly attenuated rewards as emotion furnishes. It is curious that the non-Catholic school which gives so little in the way of personal attention to the students seems to reap abundant reward in the way of practical gratitude, while the solicitous, self-sacrificing educator reaps only scant recognition.

It would be pleasant to close these reflections by a prophecy of brighter days to come. I do prophesy brighter days in many respects, but until most of the foolishness is exorcised out of human nature Catholics will still continue to think that their own schools are lacking in some particular excellence, just as our American girls will continue to covet the protection and

affection of European aristocracy in preference to the splendid manhood of America. But no doubt there will be improvement in both matters as time goes on. As for endowment, there is grave reason to fear that this particular age, which more than any other has been marked by great generosity toward schools, will have completely passed away before our people catch the enthusiasm. Perhaps the future generation may become the beneficiary of a condition which cannot but appear unsatisfactory to the deserving Catholic colleges of to-day.

### WIT AND HUMOR.


Here there looms before us the need of defining in their turn optimist and pessimist, and fortunately a lover of paradox has made the attempt, holding that an optimist is "a man who believes that the devil is dead and that hell is half full of water," whereas a pessimist is merely "a man who has just been talking with an optimist." One of these recalls the Yankee definition of hell recorded in Lowell's preface to the "Biglow Papers" as "a place where they don't bank the fires nights."

This is wit—unless it is rather to be accepted as humor, continues *Scribner's Magazine*. It is wit which inspired Douglas Jerrold's definition of dogmatism as "puppydom come to maturity" and his description of a conservative as "a man who refuses to look at the new moon out of respect for that ancient institution the old moon." Oddly enough the same thought has been uttered with equal felicity of phrase by the poet Aubrey de Vere when he contended that a Tory was "a man who wanted to uninvent printing and to un-discover America."

It is to Thackeray, Jerrold's colleague on the staff of *Punch*, that we must look for the clearest definition of a snob, as "one who meanly admires mean things."

And yet another aspect of snobbery was once hit off with glancing wit by Emerson. When a friend dismissed a certain woman as a snob Emerson gently corrected him with the suave explanation that it might rather be said of her that "she is a person having a great sympathy with success."

One of the wittiest of definitions, not too bitterly flavored with paradox, is that which describes a bore as "a person who insists on talking about himself when you want to talk about yourself." There is cause for regret that this clever saying cannot be credited to its maker; it has a certainty of stroke and an insight into human frailty which would have delighted La Rochefoucauld, from whose bitter sweet aphorisms it would be possible to except more than one definition neither platitudinous nor paradoxical.



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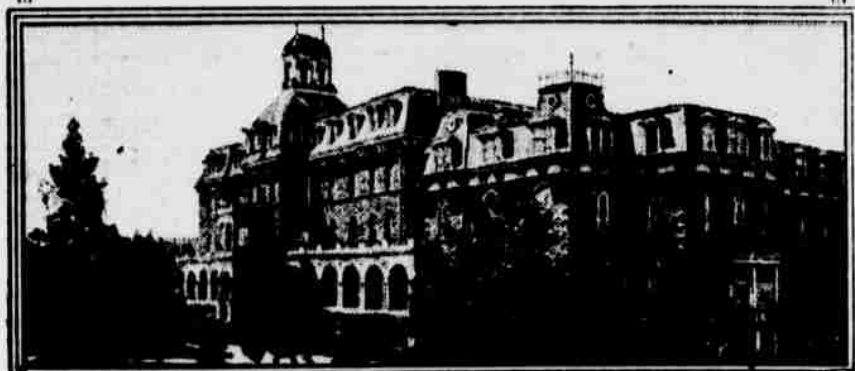




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